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### Reconquest Colonialism and Andalusī Narrative Practice in the *Conde Lucanor*<sup>1</sup>

In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, when Cordova was the richest and most populous city in Europe, and the Umayyad Caliphate was setting the standard for cultural florescence in the Islamic world, a group of Christian nobles in the rocky precincts of northernmost Spain sought to expand their territorial holdings southward, into al-Andalus. Their aim was to unseat Islamic political power on the Iberian Peninsula, and they sought to authorize this project by discrediting Muslim leaders as the usurpers of lands to which the Christians were rightful heirs. In their view, Christian conquests of al-Andalus were the recuperation of lands that, in the eyes of God himself, belonged to them.

Spanish culture as we know it today is the product of this medieval frontier society, in which Christians and Muslims —during a span of some 700 years— continuously negotiated a political border that was culturally quite porous. By the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Christian rulers had gained control of the large majority of the Iberian Peninsula, including the populous and important cities of Cordova and Seville in the south. The Christians who populated these newly conquered lands found themselves in close contact with a sizeable population of Andalusī Muslims (and Jews and Christians) who had remained. The conquering Christians were great consumers of Andalusī culture in general, especially arts and sciences, and even literature. At the same time, they viewed Islam, the dominant religion of al-Andalus, as a purely illegitimate basis for political power and social organization. If the official narrative of Reconquest argues for tidy cultural purity and conformity, the reality on the ground is, in contrast, a messy and emergent pluralism, one that resonates with early modern and modern colonial experiences.<sup>2</sup>

While medievalists have been slower to embrace postcolonial theoretical approaches than their colleagues working on modern and contemporary texts, they have begun to adapt the ideas of thinkers such as Fanon, Memmi, Bhaba, Spivak, and others to medieval European perceptions of and experience in the East.<sup>3</sup> However, it is curious that Hispanists (with what may be the sole exception of Richard Hanlon) have completely avoided reading the Christian conquest of al-Andalus as a colonial project. Despite the substantial differences between medieval and modern colonialisms as regards political reality, public discourse, and the construction of subjectivity,

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this article appeared in my *Framing Iberia: Maqāmāt and Frametale Narratives in Medieval Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 129-156.

<sup>2</sup> Modern scholars of the Reconquest and of *convivencia* have commented extensively on this disparity. For a deconstruction of the Reconquest as a purely religious enterprise, see Maravall ("Idea" 1-37 and *Concepto* 263-312). His argument has been reevaluated more recently by Hillgarth ("Historiography"). Castro likewise has noted that military orders in Reconquest-era Spain (those of Calatrava, Santiago, and Alcántara) were "más política[s] que religiosa[s]" ('more political than religious') (*España* 181). For a re-evaluation of the medieval Iberian frontier as a culturally porous space, see Linehan ("Frontier").

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Dagenais and Greer ("Decolonizing"), as well as the other essays published in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30.3 (2000). Contributions by Hispano-Medievalists are conspicuously absent from the collections of essays edited by Jeffrey Cohen and Kabir and Williams, and there is as yet no monograph by a medieval Hispanist to accompany Kinoshita's study of medieval French texts. For an excellent overview of medieval postcolonial criticism, see Holsinger.

one may safely argue that the Christian conquests of al-Andalus were a colonial endeavor, one of several studied by historians of medieval Europe.<sup>4</sup> The case of medieval Christian Iberian colonialism was distinct from other medieval colonialisms (such as French and English crusading in the Middle East) in that it contributed fundamentally to the formation of a Spanish national identity, and served as a domestic proving ground for the conquest of Spanish territories in the Americas.

Don Juan Manuel, author of the *Conde Lucanor* (1340) (= *CL*),<sup>5</sup> was the most powerful nobleman of his time. He held extensive lands in Murcia, which retained a far higher proportion of its pre-conquest Muslim population than did neighboring Castile and Leon (O’Callaghan, *History* 459). While his military and political career depended on eradicating Islam from the Iberian Peninsula, he earned his literary renown—in part—by imitating and incorporating Andalusi narrative tradition and history into his own writings. In Juan Manuel’s adaptation of the *frametale* genre, the *CL*, this dissonance between the religious and political agendas of the Reconquest manifests in narrative. If the *CL* shows us the ideology of the Reconquest, it also offers the reader a reflection of the more complicated and nuanced reality of daily life and human behavior characteristic of Reconquest-era Castile-Leon (Linehan, “Frontier” 53). In it, Juan Manuel distills the political realities, religious discourse, and cultural interaction of the time into the first original *frametale* in any European vernacular.<sup>6</sup>

Juan Manuel’s religious agenda and frontier political philosophy come across quite clearly in the 50 *exemplos* of the *CL*. The idea of the Christian nobleman’s duty to wage war against Islam permeates the work, most starkly in these words of the Count’s advisor Patronio: “. . . Dios vos poble en tierra quel podades seruir contra los moros” (. . . God has given you towns in the land so that you might serve him against the Moors) (2: 58). At the same time, Juan Manuel’s willingness to embrace Andalusi narrative genres and materials, including a number of proverbs which he quotes in the original Arabic, seems on the surface to run counter to his official narrative of Reconquest. This apparent contradiction is typical both of the colonial society in which Don Juan Manuel came of age and of his genre of choice in writing the *CL*. The *frametale* genre itself is didactically ambiguous, depending as it does on exemplary tales (and not direct discourse alone) to illustrate the didactic arguments of the main characters. Often there is a discrepancy between what the author purports to be teaching, and the lessons the reader perceives (Menocal, “Life” 487).

Reading the *CL* is not simply a question of identifying elements originating in the culture of the Other, whether Muslim, Arab, or Andalusi; it is seeing how conflictive and colonial engagement between a Christian polity and its Christian and non-Christian subjects gives rise to new ways of telling stories and giving voice to one’s experience. In the *CL*, Castilian readers experience a new way of telling stories that reflects the contradictions characterizing the colonial culture of 14<sup>th</sup>-century Castile-Leon.

<sup>4</sup> Historians of medieval Europe have likewise begun to view aspects of European trade and crusade in the East as colonial activities. See, for example, Balard and Ducellier, and Bartlett.

<sup>5</sup> The *Conde Lucanor*, or *Libro de Patronio* of Don Juan Manuel is extant in seven manuscripts (Madrid: Nacional, 19163; Madrid: Nacional, 19426; Madrid: Nacional, 4236; Madrid: Nacional, 6376; Madrid: Academia Española, 15; Madrid: Academia de la Historia, 9-29-4/5893; and Santander: Menéndez y Pelayo, M-92) (*PhiloBiblon*). All quotations of original texts by Juan Manuel are from the edition of Bleca (Obras 2: 9-503). For a complete study of the manuscript tradition of the *Conde Lucanor* see Hammer.

<sup>6</sup> The *Conde Lucanor* predates the better known medieval European *frametales*, Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (ca. 1350) and Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1400).

## Colonizing the Frametale

In addition to being an actor in the political and military aspects of the culture of Reconquest, Juan Manuel was also active in its literary manifestation. Just as the Christian *repobladores* took possession of Andalusī homes and fields, Juan Manuel appropriated the frametale genre from Andalusī literary practice. The frametale is a collection of stories framed by an overarching literary setting in which characters narrate stories to one another. The best-known examples of the genre are the *Thousand and One Nights*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and Boccaccio's *Decameron*. The genre was introduced to readers of Castilian with the translation of *Kalila wa-Dimna* commissioned by Alfonso X (at the time still *Infante*, or crown prince) in 1251. Alfonso's brother, Don Fadrique, not to be outdone by his higher-ranking brother, similarly commissioned a translation of the Arabic frametale *Sendebār* in 1253.<sup>7</sup> Having inherited the genre from his uncles' translations of *Calila e Dimna* and *Sendebār*, Juan Manuel writes the first frametale in a European vernacular language, inhabiting the genre as one inhabits a structure. In adopting the Andalusī practice of the frametale genre, he renders his rigid ideological program vulnerable to the more porous "border thinking" characteristic of the frametale genre.

Walter Mignolo describes border thinking as a way of decentering our epistemological and hermeneutic habits by challenging the way we produce and disseminate knowledge. He advocates questioning the institutionalized linguistic hegemony of colonial languages such as Spanish and English in the study of post-colonial cultures that have become "transnational" and "transimperial" (250-66). Juan Manuel is a product of colonial Christian Iberia, and his work reflects the interplay between the culture of the conqueror and that of the conquered. The frametale, borrowed from Andalusī literary practice, and inherently resistant to didactically stable readings, destabilizes Juan Manuel's political and religious discourse of Reconquest. The frametale portrays narrative as a dynamic storytelling practice, as opposed to a vehicle for doctrine. Living in an environment whose design reflects the values and cultural practices of others can change you. Pierre Bourdieu ("Maison" and "Berber") wrote that built environments result from and perpetuate specific patterns of social practice. Heather Ecker has shown this to be the case in the Christian conquest of Seville. According to her, the administration of neighborhood mosques in Seville very directly determined that of local parishes after the city changed hands in 1248 ("Administer").

A similar dynamic obtains in the case of the *CL*. For Juan Manuel, this means that the frametale structure he adapts from Arabic works such as *Sendebār* and *Calila* affects not only the way in which he delivers his message, but also the message itself. While Juan Manuel's didactic intent is quite clear in his explicit verse summations of each *exemplo*,<sup>8</sup> the genre he chooses undermines this clarity. This tension between the author's didactic rigidity and the inherent didactic ambiguity of his chosen genre exemplifies the complexity of life on the frontier, playing out on the pages of the *CL* the blurring of boundaries between the cultural legacies of conqueror and conquered.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> For an overview of the frametale literature of 13<sup>th</sup>- and 14<sup>th</sup>-century Castile, see Lacarra (*Cuentística* 11-31).

<sup>8</sup> At the end of each *exemplo*, Juan Manuel sums up the lesson learned in an original couplet, which he calls a 'viesso.'

<sup>9</sup> This is but one example of how Spanish identity has been formed in terms of its relationship with al-Andalus and its Jewish and Islamic past. See, for example, Castro (*Realidad* 28), Goytisolo, and Barkai.

### The Christian conquest of al-Andalus as a colonial enterprise

Where, if not in the centuries of Reconquest, did the *conquistadores* learn to conquer and colonize (Manrique; Taboada)? Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz states this position quite clearly:

Descubrimos, conquistamos y colonizamos América siguiendo la trayectoria multisecular de nuestro medioevo. No tuvimos que improvisar una política de expansión y de colonización más allá de las fronteras nacionales al comenzar la Edad Moderna. (*España* 2: 508)

(We discovered, conquered, and colonized America following the multi-century trajectory of our Middle Ages. We did not need to improvise a policy of expansion and colonization beyond our national borders when the Modern Age began).

The political directive of the Reconquest was best summed up over a century before Juan Manuel lived, in the anonymous *Poema de Mio Cid*. After conquering the Muslim-held town of Alcocer, the Cid instructs his men: “posaremos en sus casas y dellos nos serviremos” (‘we will stay in their houses and make use of them’) (140, v. 22). This is colonialism in a nutshell; Christians are not to deport or kill Muslims, but rather should subjugate them politically and exploit them by occupying their space and appropriating their resources. It has been well established that the *Poema de Mio Cid* is far more concerned with politics and economics than with religion (J. Duggan; Harney). Given this, I believe the Cid would agree with Albert Memmi’s definition of the colonizer:

Étranger, venu dans un pays par les hasards de l’histoire, il a réussi non seulement à se faire une place, mais à prendre celle de l’habitant, à s’octroyer des privilèges étonnants au détriment des ayants droit. E cela, non en vertu de lois locales, qui légitiment d’une certaine manière l’inégalité par la tradition, mais en bouleversant les règles admises, en y substituant les siennes. (*Colonisé* 38)

(A foreigner, having come to a land by the accidents of history, he has succeeded not merely in creating a place for himself but also in taking away that of the inhabitant, granting himself astounding privileges to the detriment of those rightfully entitled to them. And this not by virtue of local laws, which in a certain way legitimize this inequality by tradition, but by upsetting the established rules and substituting his own.) (trans. Greenfeld 9)

This is precisely the type of regime change implied in Reconquest: the supplanting of one political and social order for another, for the sake of material opportunity. The Christian conquest of al-Andalus facilitated an unprecedented measure of social mobility in a society where historically, one’s social standing was determined by that of one’s father.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> “During the Central Middle Ages in Iberia social fluidity appears constant. Thus, the *peón* who desired to raise his legal position to that of a *caballero* usually had the capability to do so.” (Powers 101). See also Glick (*Islamic* 162).

For medievals, the most natural justification for such a colonial project (indeed for any war) would be religion; but this does not mean that a desire to convert Andalusī Muslims and Jews was the primary motivation of the Reconquest. Studies of the monastic and royal chronicles of the 8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries make it eminently clear that the ideological basis of Reconquest colonialism was to “recuperate” land to which Iberian Christians had a historical right.<sup>11</sup> Unlike literary and cultural scholars, historians have not hesitated to describe the Reconquest as a colonial enterprise. In his study of the partition of Mallorca, Ricard Soto i Company follows Memmi quite closely in describing the Christian *repobladores* of Mallorca as opportunistic colonials whose low social standing or outright mediocrity would preclude economic success in the home country.<sup>12</sup>

A Mallorca s’hi instal·laren, més aviat, una sèrie d’administracions, tant reial com senyorial, que organitzaven la colonització per delegació. Els individus lligats a aquestes administracions, que hom no resisteix la temptació de qualificar de ‘colonials,’ trauran, a la llarga, el màxim profit de la colonització, i constituïran una classe privilegiada de la qual no formaven part possiblement al país d’origen. (20)

(Soon in Mallorca, a series of administrations were established, both royal and seigniorial, that organized the colony by delegation. The individuals associated with these administrations, that one cannot resist categorizing as ‘colonials,’ received, by and large, the maximum benefit of the colonization, and constituted a privileged class of which they would not possibly have formed part in the country of origin).

The members of this privileged class, Christian Castilians and Aragonese, were avid consumers of Andalusī clothes, textiles, weaponry, farming technology, architecture, and of course, literature.<sup>13</sup> Many of Spain’s greatest architectural monuments were Andalusī-built: the Alhambra in Granada, the Giralda and Torre de Oro in Seville, the Cathedral of Cordova, and scores of provincial fortresses and churches predate the conquest of al-Andalus. The *repobladores* (settlers) of the newly-conquered cities and towns of the south took possession of and adapted existing houses built to reflect Andalusī lifestyles and habits, and their descendents live there to this day (Valdeón Baroque et al. 39).

<sup>11</sup> See Maravall (“Idea” 269-87), Linehan (*History* 95-127), and O’Callaghan (*Reconquest* 4-7). Historians have been studying Medieval Spain as a colonial problem for decades. See, for example, Burns (*Islam*, “Medieval”) and Lourie. MacKay describes *repobladores* quite plainly as “colonists” (36). More recently, Heather Ecker, a historian of architecture, plainly refers to the “Castilian conquests and colonizations” (“Administer” 45).

<sup>12</sup> Compare with the language of Memmi: “C’est le médiocre, enfin, qui impose le ton général de la colonie. C’est lui qui est le véritable partenaire du colonisé, car c’est lui qui a le plus besoin de compensation et de la vie coloniale. . . . Si tout colonialiste n’est pas un médiocre, tout colonisateur doit accepter en quelque mesure la médiocrité de la majorité des hommes de la colonisation” (*Colonisé* 75). (‘It is the mediocre citizens who set the general tone of the colony. They are the true partners of the colonized, for it is the mediocre who are most in need of compensation and of colonial life. . . . Even if every colonist is not mediocre, every colonizer must, in a certain measure, accept the mediocrity of colonial life and the men who thrive on it.’) (trans. Greenfeld 51).

<sup>13</sup> For an overview of the Spanish love affair with Andalusī and “mudéjar” material culture, see Dodds (“Arts” and *Al-Andalus*) and Feliciano. For photographs representative of Andalusī plastic arts, and a study of Mudéjar artistic production for Christian clients, see Ecker (*Caliphs* 78-108).

## The discourse of Reconquest

The narrative of Reconquest, as first propagated in the Latin monastic and later Catalan and Castilian royal chronicles (Maravall, *Concepto* 261-312), is that the Muslim invasion of 711 and subsequent conquests left the Iberian Peninsula almost entirely under Muslim control, with the exception of a small enclave in Asturias, to where the most loyal and valiant Christian Visigoths fled, rather than endure the bitter life of a protected minority (*dimmi*) under Islam. This is the version that took root in the official and popular imagination, persisted, and flourished through the fall of Granada in 1492 (Maravall, *Concepto* 267, “Idea” 4). Juan Manuel expresses this very idea in the *Libro de estados*, where he plainly states that war against Iberian Muslims is justified, because they

se apoderaron de muchas tierras et avn tomaron muchas et tienen las hoy en día, de las que eran de los christianos que fueron conuertidos por los apóstoles a la fe de Ihesu Christo. Et por esto, a guerra entre los christianos et los moros, et abra fasta que ayan cobrado los christianos las tierras que los moros les tienen forçadas. (1: 248)

(assumed control, and even conquered many lands and hold them to this day, lands that used to belong to the Christians who were converted by the Apostles to the faith of Jesus Christ. And for this reason, there is war between Christians and Muslims, and will be until the Christians have recuperated the lands that the Muslims took from them by force.)

Despite such pointed declarations, the reality of 14<sup>th</sup>-century frontier Castile in which he lived is far more complex, and has more to do with politics than with institutional religion. In broad strokes, the political gamesmanship of frontier Castile during the 14<sup>th</sup> century was not much different from contemporary territorial struggles in France (Jones) or Italy (C. Duggan; Hearder and Morris 72-88; Lerner 38-46). In Spain, Christian and Muslim monarchs were likewise engaged in a continuous process of negotiating their territorial borders and political allegiances (Linehan, *History* 506-59). This held equally true for relations between Castile-Leon and Aragon as it did for those between Castile-Leon and Granada.<sup>14</sup> Within Castile itself, the 14<sup>th</sup> century was particularly conflictive for the crown and nobility, a time of political strife, social upheaval, and economic depression (Valdeón Baruque et al. 54-81; Macpherson and Tate 30). Juan Manuel himself describes this period as a “doloroso et triste tienpo” (‘doleful and sad time’) (1: 208). In 12<sup>th</sup>- and 13<sup>th</sup>-century Castile-Leon, war against Islam provided a convenient pretense and rhetorical repertory for southward territorial expansion into al-Andalus (O’Callaghan, *Reconquest* 20).

Juan Manuel’s own views of Islam are in line with the prevailing religious polemical discourse of his day: it is a Christian duty to struggle against Islam on the Iberian Peninsula. In the prologue to *CL*, Patronio explains to the Count Lucanor that armed struggle against the

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<sup>14</sup> Don Juan Manuel’s correspondence describes a Castile defined by unstable borders, and continuously shifting alliances with the neighboring kingdoms of Aragon and Granada (Giménez Soler, *Juan Manuel* 445, no. 295 and 463-64, no. 320). See also Maravall (*Concepto* 285).

Muslim ‘occupiers’ of the Iberian Peninsula is the best way to “salvar el alma, guarda[r] vuestro estado et vuestra onra” (2: 58) (‘save your soul, maintain your position and your reputation’). That is, the foundation of one’s identity as a Christian Castilian nobleman (religion, social status, reputation) rests upon the duty of Reconquest. This ideology is attested throughout the *CL*. *Exemplo* 15 describes the siege of Muslim Seville by Fernando III. In *exemplo* 28, Lorenzo Suárez Gallinato kills a renegade priest in Granada (2: 246-48). Finally, Fernán González, iconic figure of the Castilian Reconquest and protagonist of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century *Poema de Fernán González*, is depicted quite anachronistically as defeating Almanzor<sup>15</sup> in *exemplo* 37 (2: 305-06).

### Juan Manuel and Andalusī Culture

Despite his clear condemnation of Islam, as a Christian of Reconquest-era Spain, Juan Manuel is at the same time quite approving, even covetous, of Andalusī technology, learning, and popular culture. In the *Libro de los estados* (ch. LXXVI) his appreciation of Andalusī military prowess is unapologetic. He describes Muslim military skills as a “grant maravilla” (‘a great marvel’) (1: 346), claiming that Andalusī troops are so effective, that “Mas tierra correran et mayor danno faran et mayor caualgada ayuntaran dozientos omnes de cauallo de moros que seyçientos omnes de cauallo de christianos” (‘two hundred Moorish knights will cover more ground and do more damage and organize a more effective raid than will six hundred Christian knights’) (1: 346).

Juan Manuel demonstrates a similar admiration for Andalusī narrative practice in his adoption of the *frametale* genre, and in the inclusion of several Andalusī tales and proverbs in the *CL*. In this affinity, he follows the lead of his uncle Alfonso X, who commissioned the translation of numerous works of Arabic literature into Castilian, including the *frametale Kalila wa-Dimna*, which along with *Sendebär* served as a model for Juan Manuel, with a crucial difference: his uncles’ translation efforts were very much a colonial gesture, wholesale appropriation of native Andalusī literary tradition. In this they resemble the modern British colonial administrator who translates the classics of Sanskrit or Arabic. Juan Manuel’s project is quite different in that he is the product of a later, hybrid colonial culture in which “Andalusī” and “Castilian” cultural production were not always clearly distinguished.<sup>16</sup> To the modern reader conditioned by centuries of Spanish culture as a strictly Catholic, Latin phenomenon, Juan Manuel seems to be deliberately incorporating elements of a strange and foreign, yet prestigious culture. To wit, Devoto argues that Juan Manuel is a proto-orientalist who prefigures the *maurofilia* of the sixteenth century, and purposefully imbues his *exemplos* with ‘Arabic atmosphere’ (433). But from where he stood, and in his own words, Juan Manuel was simply representing “las cosas que acaesçieron” (‘things that happened’) (2:23) — his world, his life.

In his adaptation of tales of Andalusī origin, Juan Manuel is a pioneer in vernacular Romance literature. Other medieval authors such as Petrus Alfonsi, Ramon Llull, Juan Ruiz, and the anonymous author of the *Libro del Cavallero Zifar* made ample use of ‘eastern’ tales (Alvárez, “Petrus” 289; Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi* 74; Michael; Hernández Valcárcel), but Juan Manuel is

<sup>15</sup> He is Abū ʿĀmīr ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿĀmīr al-Maʿāfirī (938-1002), known as al-Manṣūr bi’llāh (‘he who is made victorious by God’). He ruled al-Andalus from 978 until his death in 1002 as *de facto* monarch, though acting officially in the office of *hājib* (i.e., chamberlain) during the minority of Hišām II.

<sup>16</sup> In this I follow Menocal, who argues that Juan Manuel lived during “a complex transformative moment in the cultural history of Iberia, a moment where Arabic is not easily separable from the other strands of medieval culture, where it is often a part of a tight weave —as opposed to a proposed foreign ‘influence’” (“Visions” 16).

unique in that he directly reproduces historical anecdotes from Andalusī tradition. Like modern colonial architecture that recasts indigenous styles as a way of appropriating the cultural authority of the traditional built environment (Chattopadhyay; Wright 9), Juan Manuel's recasts the form and content of Andalusī narrative tradition. He appropriates the *frametale* genre from Andalusī literature, and includes in his work three *exemplos* originating from Andalusī anecdotal proverbs (nos. 30, 41, and 47) that Juan Manuel quotes phonetically in Andalusī Arabic and then translates into Castilian (2: 257-59, 324-36, and 389-91).

Scholars have speculated as to whether or not, or to what degree, Juan Manuel knew Arabic (Hitchcock). Regardless of his degree of proficiency in Arabic, his use of Andalusī narrative material (anecdotes and tales), his use of Arabic language and Andalusī narrative material invokes the cultural authority of the Andalusī Caliphate (and later *Taifa* kingdoms) populated by the protagonists of his *exempla*. All medieval Iberians, politics and religion notwithstanding, shared this nostalgia for, or appreciation of the prestigious al-Andalus of popular memory.<sup>17</sup> In doing so, Juan Manuel is laying claim to the historical legacy of the al-Andalus colonized by his grandparents' generation.

### Looking back at al-Andalus

Like other medieval Iberian Christian authors before him, Juan Manuel sees no contradiction in incorporating the *spolia* of Andalusī culture into his work. Juan Manuel happily assimilates Andalusī narrative techniques and materials into his work, provided that they present no offense to Christian doctrine. Yet as firm as he may be in his condemnation of Islam as a religion, Juan Manuel is quite ambivalent in the representation of Muslim Andalusī characters (Caldera). In broad terms, he portrays them as decadent materialists, pointing to a justification of the Reconquest as the unseating of a corrupt Islamic dynasty unfit to rule on grounds both theological and moral. David Hanlon has written that these stereotypes were "necessarily ambivalent forms of knowledge that justify a social hierarchy maintaining Mudejar subjects in positions of subordination" (480). I hold both to be true, and that stereotypes of Muslim characters in the *CL* served the double purpose of justifying the Castilian-Aragonese conquest of al-Andalus and the medieval colonialism that was its legacy.

Juan Manuel held that Christianity is the sole path to salvation. It then follows that Islam holds no promise of salvation,<sup>18</sup> and therefore Islamic political rule is inherently morally flawed. How can a just ruler insist that his or her subjects obey a law that will result in their damnation? A survey of the behavior of Andalusī characters in the *CL* bears out this notion of Muslims as decadent materialists with skewed moral priorities. The two Andalusī monarchs, Alhaquem<sup>19</sup> and

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<sup>17</sup> For example, Raymond Scheindlin writes that even by the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the "traditions of Hebrew [poets in Christian Iberia] were still deeply rooted in Arabic soil" (36). James Monroe has noted that the final years of Nasrid Granada (before the capitulation of Boabdil in 1492 to the Catholic Monarchs) were characterized by a similar nostalgia for the aesthetics of the earlier Caliphate (*Hispano-Arabic* 62-63).

<sup>18</sup> In the *Libro de los estados* he writes: "En ninguna ley que sea dada nin sea natural non se pueden saluar las almas al tienpo de agora sinon en la ley de los christianos" (1: 241) ('under no law, given or natural, it is possible to save one's soul in this time except under the law of the Christians').

<sup>19</sup> Alhaquem is al-Hakam II of Cordova, whose addition was indeed built during the years 962-966 (*EI*, "al-Hakam II"). He is protagonist of *Exemplo* no. 41 (2: 324-36).



Abenabad,<sup>20</sup> are respectively portrayed as effete, frivolous, and inattentive to political matters (Alhaquem), or uxorious and indulgent (Abenabad). This decadence, coupled with the manifest religious error of Islam, justifies the Christian conquests of Seville (Abenabad) and Cordova (Alhaquem) in the previous century.<sup>21</sup> According to Juan Manuel, though the Andalusī enjoyed a superior material culture, they were morally corrupt and politically inept, shortcomings that explain their defeat at the hands of Christian monarchs such as Fernando III and Jaime I of Aragon.

Non-historical and nameless Muslim characters are characterized as merely unscrupulous seekers of wealth. One is a young man who purposefully contracts a loveless but financially beneficial marriage and intimidates his new bride with a display of brutal violence.<sup>22</sup> The other two are a brother-sister team of cowardly grave robbers who give no thought to mutilating the corpses of those whose tombs they raid.<sup>23</sup> In these *exemplos* featuring non-historical characters, Juan Manuel signals to his audience that the protagonists are indeed *moros*, and that he has drawn the tale from Andalusī tradition with which he was so familiar. This is another way in which he demonstrates his knowledge of Andalusī culture and reinforces his authority as *Adelantado de la frontera* (Lida de Malkiel, “Tres notas” 155-94).

Juan Manuel’s ambivalent relationship with Islam and Andalusī culture demonstrated in his treatment of Andalusī Muslim characters is amplified by his choice of literary genre. The structure of the *frametale* often highlights the discrepancy between the stated didactic intent of the author and the apparent message of the interpolated tale.<sup>24</sup> The two characters whose conversation provides the pretext for the work’s 50 *exemplos* enjoy a relationship in which the power dynamic is clear: the *Conde* is the master, Patronio is his advisor and servant. One would suppose that Patronio’s advice, illustrated by the 50 *exemplos* he relates, would serve his master’s interests. Yet a closer examination of individual tales often reveals that Patronio’s advice is not necessarily borne out by his *exemplos*. Quite often, the *exemplos* are only loosely illustrative of moral or object lessons explicitly stated by Juan Manuel in the *viessos* or couplets he includes at the end of each tale. Juan Manuel’s explicit didactic program, distilled in the *viessos* (couplets) in which Juan Manuel summarizes each *exemplo*, often seems to be at odds with the actions and words of the tales’ protagonists. Part of this effect is the result of the opposite pulls of literary creativity and didactic intent: for every picture (or *exemplo*) there is a nearly infinite number of potentially suitable captions. Yet in another way, the dissonance between the *viessos* and *exemplos* of Juan Manuel is a literary reflection of the contradictions

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<sup>20</sup> Abenabad is Muḥammad ibn ʿAbbād, known as al-Muʿtamid, who ruled Seville from 1069 to 1090. In 1071, he annexed Cordova into his kingdom, which explains the setting of this *exemplo*. He was ultimately deposed and sent into exile in Morocco by the Almoravid Yūsuf b. Tashūfin (the ‘Rey Yūçef’ of the *Cantar de Mio Cid*), who had originally come to al-Andalus to aid the al-Muʿtamid against the Christians (*El*, “Abbadids”). He is protagonist of *Exemplo* 30 (2: 257-59).

<sup>21</sup> Cordova (1236) and Seville (1248) were conquered by Fernando III (‘el Santo’) of Castile-Leon (Payne 1: 73).

<sup>22</sup> The ever-popular *Exemplo* 35, “De·lo que contesçio a·vn mançebo que caso con vna muger muy fuerte et muy braua” (‘Of what happened to a youth who married a very strong and fierce woman’) (2: 285-89). On this tale in Arab tradition, see Wallhead Munuera (101-17) and El-Shamy (559-60).

<sup>23</sup> *Exemplo* 47, “De·lo que contesçio a·vn moro con vna su hermana que daua a entender que era muy medrosa” (‘Of what happened to a Moor with his sister who made one think that she was fearful’) (2: 389-91). On this tale and its relation to Andalusī oral tradition, see Monroe (“Salmà”).

<sup>24</sup> Menocal has noted that the *viessos* “are always grossly reductive and often have little to do with the story that has been told” (“Life” 487). On ambiguity in the *Conde Lucanor*, see also de Looze (“Subversion”) and England.

between the religious discourse of Reconquest and the lived reality – ‘las cosas que acaesçieron’- of a colonial frontier culture that vigorously resists the cut and dried.

Juan Manuel’s ‘border thinking,’ evident in the tension between his explicit didactic message and the more ambiguous lessons to be gleaned from any given reading, comes through most clearly in two *exemplos* that deal with figures drawn from Andalusī history. The first of these is *exemplo* 30, “De lo que contesçió al rey Abenabet de Seuilla con Ramayquia, su muger” (‘What happened to King Abenabet of Seville with his wife Ramayquía’) (2: 257-59). In it, Abenabet is portrayed as an indulgent husband who eventually must chastise his wife for her ungrateful behavior. First she witnesses a freak snowstorm in Cordova, and is saddened at the thought of never being able to see snow on a regular basis. Abenabet then orders the planting of thousands of white-blossoming almond trees throughout the sierra of Cordova, so that every February Ramayquía might be reminded of snow by the sight of the almond trees in bloom. Her next request is met with an even greater display of indulgence. From her window, she sees women making adobe bricks by the river, and wishes to do the same. Not about to let his queen muddy herself, but anxious to fulfill her whim,

. . . mando el rey fenchir de agua rosada aquella grand albuhera de Cordoua en logar de agua, et en lugar de tierra, fizo la fenchir de açucar et de canela et de gengibre et espic et clavos et musgo et ambra et algalina, et de todas buenas espeçias et buenos olores que pudian seer; et en lugar de paia, fizo poner cannas de açucar. Et desde destas cosas fue llena el albuhera de tal lodo qual entendedes que podria seer, dixo el rey a Ramayquia que se descalçase et que follase aquel lodo et que fiziesse adobes del quantos quisesse.

Otro dia, por otra cosas que se le antojo, començo a llorar; et el rey preguntole por que lo fazia.

Et ell dixol que commo non lloraria, que nunca fiziera el rey cosa por le fazer plazer. Et el rey veyendo que pues tanto avia fecho por le fazer plazer et conplir su talante, et que ya non sabia que pudiesse fazer mas, dixol vna palabra que se dize en el algarauia desta guisa: “v. a. le mahar aten?”, et quiere dezir: “¿Et non el dia del lodo?”, commo diziendo que pues las otras cosas olvidada, que non deuia olvidar el lodo que fiziera por le fazer plazer. (2: 258)<sup>25</sup>

(. . . the King ordered that great pond of Cordova be filled with rose water instead of water, and instead of dirt, he had it filled with sugar and cinnamon and ginger and spices and clove and musk and amber and algalina, and with all good spices and good aromas there were; and in place of straw, he had them put sugar cane. Once the pond was filled with a mud such that you could only imagine, the King told Ramayquía to take off her shoes and enjoy that mud and make as many adobe bricks as she wanted.

The next day she began to cry over something else she wanted, and the King asked her why she was doing it.

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<sup>25</sup> This anecdotal proverb appears in the late 13<sup>th</sup>-century collection of Andalusī proverbs by the Andalusī ethnographer Abū Yahyā °Ubaid Allāh al-Zajjālī (Ould Mohamed Baba 166, no. 1950; Al-Zajjālī 448). Its usage has continued into modern times, and has been collected in Tetuan, Morocco (Dawūd 184).

And she said that why shouldn't she be crying, that the King never did anything to please her. And the King, seeing as how he had already done so much to please her and satisfy her desires, and not knowing what else he could do for her, said to her in Arabic something like this: "wa lā nahār aṭ-ṭīn?", and it means: "And not the day of the mud?", meaning that since she had forgotten all the other things, she should not forget the mud that he made to please her.)

The *viesso* at the end of the *exemplo* distills the anecdote's object lesson as follows: "Qui te desconosçe tu bien fecho, non dexes por el tu grand proueço" ('Whoever does not recognize your good deeds, do not grant him great benefit') (2: 259). Therefore, the stated didactic message is that you must be judicious in how you reward your subordinates, lest they begin to take your patronage for granted. Despite his extravagant indulgence of his wife's whims, Abenabet ultimately refuses Ramayquía, reminding her of her past ingratitude, and Juan Manuel seems to regard him as an example of a decadent, indulgent ruler who ultimately is able to set limits when necessary.

The setting in Andalusī Cordova, together with Abenabet's exaggerated extravagance in fulfilling Ramayquía's wishes, communicates the implied message that even the most powerful Muslim kings are weak-willed when it comes to pleasing their wives, and generally preoccupied with sensual matters. Underlying this criticism of Andalusī mores, however, is a begrudging and unvoiced admiration for, and perhaps jealousy of, the superior material culture of al-Andalus, which the "mud" made up of spices mixed with sugar cane represents. This material culture was an important part of the colonial legacy of the Reconquest, and the audience of the *CL* would have been very familiar with Andalusī (or *mudéjar*) textiles, architecture, agricultural science, and the like.

The other Andalusī ruler in the *CL*, al-Ḥakam II, is the protagonist of *exemplo* 41: "De·lo que contesçio a·vn rey de Cordoua quel dizian Alhaquem" ("What happened to a king of Cordova called Alhaquem"). In it, Alhaquem suffers the scorn of his subjects for failing to leave a legacy befitting of a Caliph:

Et acaesçio que estando vn dia folgando, que tannian antel vn estrumento de que se pagauan mucho los moros, que a nonbre albogon. Et el rey paro mientes et entendio que non fazia tan buen son commo era menester, et tomo el albogon et annadio en·el vn forado en la parte de·yuso en derecho de·los otros forados, et dende adelante faze el albogon muy meior son que fasta entonce fazia.

Et commo quier que aquello era buen fecho para en aquella cosa, por que non era tan grand fecho commo conuinia de fazer a rey, las gentes, en manera de escarnio, començaron aquel fecho a·loar et dizian quando loauan a alguno: 'V.a. he de ziat Alhaquim', que quiere dezir: 'Este es el annadamiento del rey Alhaquem'.

Et esta palabra fue sonada tanto por la tierra fasta que·la ouo de oyr el rey, et pregunto por que dezian las gentes esta palabra. Et commo quier que gelo quisieran encobrir, tanto los afinco, que gelo ovieron a dezir.

Et desde el esto oyo, tomo ende grand pesar, pero commo era muy buen rey, non quiso fazer mal en·los que dizian esta palabra, mas puso en su coraçon de fazer otro annadamiento de que por fuerça oviessen las gentes a·loar el su fecho.

Entonçe, por que la mezquita de Cordoua non era acabada, annadio en·ella aquel rey toda la labor que y menguaua et acaba. Esta es la mayor et mas conplida et mas noble mezquita que·los moros avian en Espanna, et loado a Dios, es agora egleſia e llaman la Sancta Maria de Cordoua, et offreçiola el sancto rey don Fernando a·Sancta Maria quando gano a·Cordoua de·los moros. (2: 325)

(It happened that while he was at leisure one day, that they were playing before him an instrument very popular among the Moors, called the *albogón*. And the king realized that it did not sound as good as it should, and took the *albogón* and added a hole in the lower part in line with the other holes, and since then the *albogón* makes a much nicer sound than it used to.

And although that was a deed in its own right, because it was not a deed appropriate for a king, the people, by way of ridicule, began to praise it and said, in doing so: ‘*wa hādhā zīyādat al-Ḥakam*’, which means: ‘this is the addition of the King al-Ḥakam’.

And this anecdote was repeated so often throughout the land that the King heard it, and asked why people were telling it. And although they wanted to keep it from him, he insisted so much that they had to tell him.

As soon as he heard this he became very depressed, but as he was a good king, he did not seek to punish those who were telling this anecdote, but rather became determined to make another addition for which the people would have no choice but to praise his name.

And so, because the Mosque of Cordova was not finished, that king invested in it all the necessary labor and completed it. This is the largest, grandest and noblest mosque that the Moors had in all of Spain, and, praise to God, is now the church called Santa María of Cordova, and the King San Fernando dedicated it to her when he won Cordova from the Moors.)

Juan Manuel’s explicit message in the *viesso* that follows is that one should always try to accomplish the greatest deeds possible, for greatness is immortal: “Si algun bien fizieres / que muy grande non fuere, / faz grandes si pudieres, / que el bien nunca muere” (‘If you achieve something / that is not very great, / [also] achieve greatness if you can, / for greatness does not die’) (2: 326). In Patronio’s version above, the public ridicule Alhaquem suffers opens his eyes to the necessity of establishing a legacy of great accomplishments. The message is clear: it is not enough to improve a musical instrument; the king must dedicate himself to statecraft and to kingly pursuits, lest his legacy suffer.

However, the implied message is somewhat more complex. Alhaquem’s initial “accomplishment” of the addition of the extra hole in the *albogón* describes a young monarch who is frivolous by nature, and who must be goaded into proper kinglike behavior by public ridicule. Eventually, he rises to the challenge and with the expansion of the Great Mosque, manages to change the meaning of “this is the addition of al-Ḥakam” from a backhanded compliment into a paragon of achievement.<sup>26</sup> While the *viesso* focuses on the need to strive for

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<sup>26</sup> “Et el loamiento que fasta estonçe le fazian escarniçiendo lo, finco despues por loor; et oy en dia dizen los moros quando quieren loar algun buen fecho: ‘Este es el annadamiento de Alhaquem’” (‘And the praise that until then had

greatness, in the actual narration Alhaquem is characterized more by his error than by its correction. The same is true of the *exemplo* of Abenabad, in which the narrative is far more focused on his extravagant treatment of his wife than it is with his ability to admonish her for her lack of gratitude. In short, although Juan Manuel's *viessos* orient these anecdotes as positive examples by virtue of the kings' decisive actions, the narration orients them as negative ones by virtue of their material indulgence and moral decadence.

If we do give credence to the *viessos* that tell us that these are positive examples, we are faced with another contradiction: given that the Reconquest is justified by the illegitimacy of Muslim rule, why would a Castilian statesman the likes of Juan Manuel draw on the deeds of Muslim rulers for exemplary governance? Such moments of ambiguity and indeterminacy are the result of Juan Manuel's attempt to press a genre that favors multivalence and critical reading into the service of a more rigid didactic position.

By way of conclusion, the tension between the official sectarian rhetoric of Reconquest and the realities of the colonial experience permeate the *CL*, particularly in Juan Manuel's representation of Andalusī history and culture. As a Christian nobleman whose lands were won from al-Andalus, he enjoyed all the advantages of a colonizer, along with the complicated relationship with the colonized that comes with them. Yet his affinity for Andalusī culture reveals some of the contradictions of Christian Iberian colonialism: Andalusī Muslims are unfit to rule, yet worthy of both high praise and imitation. Juan Manuel's enthusiasm for Andalusī literary technique and popular narrative tradition determined both the structure and (in part) the content of the *CL*. Like the Cathedral of Cordova, framed by the outer walls of the Great Mosque of Cordova, Juan Manuel's *CL* is framed by Andalusī narrative tradition, and belongs to it as well as to Christian, Latin tradition. As one of the leading noblemen of Reconquest-era Castile, Juan Manuel was bound to undermine the political basis of the Andalusī culture he so admires. This contradiction is projected onto the pages of the *CL*. Don Juan Manuel's political and religious rhetoric is that of the Reconquest, but his narrative sensibilities are informed by Andalusī notions of what stories are, and how they are told and written. The result is a narrative dissonance between stories he tells, and the stories he tells us he tells.

David A. Wacks  
University of Oregon

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been ridiculing him, was later turned into actual praise; and these days the Moors say, when they want to praise a good deed: "This is the addition of Al-Ḥakam") (2: 326).

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